

5-1-1942

Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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Recommended Citation

Mueller, J. T. (1942) "Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 13 , Article 32.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol13/iss1/32>

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Theological Observer — **ദിക്രിഷ്-ടൈംഗ്സിക്രിഷ്**

The Lutheran Message Brought to Central America.— From Honduras of Central America a missionary of the Evangelical Reformed Church, Mr. Harold N. Auler, sent an interesting letter reporting on the invasion of that state by the Lutheran Hour broadcast. Writing to the office of the Lutheran Hour, he reports thus: "In January I had an opportunity to visit Tegucigalpa, the capital of this republic, and received some interesting information regarding your broadcasts. Believing this information to be of interest as well as value to you, I am taking this means of passing it on to you.

"The Central Plaza or Parque Central, as the block-square park is called in Tegucigalpa, has facing it the Cathedral of Tegucigalpa, a Roman Catholic church. An old building of the Spanish colonial time and type, it is a stately edifice but, of course, means little in the spiritual life of the people. We went to the mass to investigate things on January 6 and found 80 women and children and two men in the cathedral. The Festival of the Three Kings is important, and one would expect a large crowd. To the other side of the plaza, not in front of the Cathedral but to its left, is the National Museum, and next to it are two loud-speakers of the Tegucigalpa Radio Station HRN. To the right of the Cathedral is the City Hall and a hotel; the other side of the plaza is flanked by stores. The plaza has cement benches and is beautified with trees and bushes. Every night the benches and walks are well occupied by people who go to hear the programs over Station HRN. On certain occasions your station is heard all over the plaza and even in the cathedral over the Tegucigalpa Radio HRN. One of our missionaries spent several months in the capital and stated that on several occasions he sat in the park to enjoy the Lutheran Hour. Remembering the fact that this is a Roman Catholic country and that the broadcasters are just to the side (say 150 feet) of the Cathedral, one must feel grateful that the pure Gospel is thus heard from your station. We heard that objections were made but were overruled.

"In December the twin city of Tegucigalpa — called Comayaguela — celebrated its annual festival of Feria de Comayaguela. It is a civic-religious celebration. There, too, loud-speakers were put up in the midst of the booths, and your Lutheran Hour was heard in a Roman Catholic city and festival."

God be praised for this progress of the message of justification by grace through faith. At once the words of Ps. 110:2 come to one's mind, "Rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies." **A.**

The U. L. C. A. and Sectarian Protestantism.— When the executive board of the U. L. C. A. met in January, among the subjects it considered was the relation which the U. L. C. A. sustains with the World Council of Churches and with the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. "Also under consideration," so the *Lutheran* of January 28 reports, "is a proposition which originated in Atlantic City recently to merge into one organization several agencies of interdenominational

co-operation, such as the Foreign Missions Council, the Home Missions Conference, the Educational Conference, and some of their major subdivisions." As to action taken by the executive board, the *Lutheran* states, "Snap decisions are not contemplated by the executive board. Instead, special committees have been designated that are charged to gather information and arrange meetings through which all U. L. C. A. agencies concerned in interdenominational co-operation can bring experience and principles to bear upon effective conclusions. Doubtless our coming convention at Louisville next October will receive reports and determine lines of action in so far as the U. L. C. A. is concerned."

One of the criticisms which conservative Lutherans have voiced against the U. L. C. A. is that it follows a unionistic course. The above report substantiates the charge. If the U. L. C. A. maintained its consultative relations with the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America in order to tell this organization, permeated as it is with Modernism and with gross indifference to matters of doctrine, of the wrath of God which is enkindled by disloyalty to the revealed truth and to rescue from the burning ship what still can be brought into safety, one might find it possible to justify such membership. If that were the situation, we might be willing to find a parallel in the course of the Lutherans preparing in 1537 to attend a general council convoked by the Pope, adverted to by Luther in his preface to the Smalcald Articles. But unfortunately, as far as our information goes, such is by no means the role which the U. L. C. A. has chosen for itself in joining the Federal Council of Churches indirectly through a consultative membership. Its position is not that of a zealous witness of the truth, but of a friend of Modernism-riddled denominations. There are sectarian churches whose members revolt against the thought of belonging to this faith-denying Federal Council, and the large U. L. C. A. does not possess the courage to say "No" when the invitation to belong to the Council is presented. The same judgment, we fear, must be voiced with respect to the membership of the U. L. C. A. in the World Council of Churches. It is the failure to be a salt, to testify, which we find iniquitous. Besides, of course, we have to point to the disregard of the warning of the Scriptures against the virus of false doctrine which is evident in this case. There is, moreover, the fellowshipping of outspoken errorists. If the U. L. C. A. identifies itself with organizations in which the truth is trampled on, it cannot complain when conservative Lutherans charge it with disloyalty to the Scriptures. A.

The New Archbishop of Canterbury a Reed Shaken by the Wind?— Writing about the new primate of the Church of England, the editor of the *Presbyterian* says in an editorial, "Dr. Wm. Temple is widely known in this country. A few years ago he traveled in the United States and was entertained at many places. He was a guest for a time in Presbyterian groups at Princeton and elsewhere. Dr. Temple has a robust personality as well as physique. In connection with his recent selection as Archbishop of Canterbury, we think it proper to quote a paragraph which he wrote on October 1, 1937, as chairman of the Church of England Commission on Education, appointed in 1922. Dealing with divergent doctrinal views expressed in different parts of the report,

Dr. Temple declared in the introduction, 'In view of my own responsibility in the Church, I think it right to affirm here that I wholeheartedly accept as historical facts the birth of our Lord from a virgin mother and the resurrection of His physical body from death and the tomb. I anticipate, though with less assurance, that these events will appear to be intrinsically bound up with His deity when the relations between the spiritual and physical elements in our nature are more completely understood. But I fully recognize the position of those who sincerely affirm the reality of our Lord's incarnation without accepting one or both of these two events as actual historical occurrences, regarding the records rather as parables than as history, a presentation of spiritual truth in narrative form.' (See Report, p. 12.) Here in a few words from Dr. Temple himself we believe one finds a good thumbnail picture of the new Archbishop of Canterbury. We are told that the Church of England is rapidly losing ground. We do not find much reason for hope that under this new administration the tide will be turned. The elevation of Dr. Temple causes no surprise. It is typically English, middling, and obvious; the choice might have been far worse, and it might possibly have been better. We shall see." Evidently the new Archbishop of Canterbury would not hesitate to sign the iniquitous Auburn Affirmation which declares that on the doctrines of verbal inspiration, the virgin birth of Jesus, his bodily resurrection, the substitutionary atonement, and the historical reality of His miracles, one may disagree with the historic Christian position without injury to one's faith. May God have mercy on the Church of England under this Laodicean leadership!

A.

Is War Sin?—*The Calvin Forum*, while discussing the anti-Scriptural and antidemocratic attitude of modernistic pacifism, considers also the question whether war is sin.

We read: "From time to time one can read the statement in the religious press that war is sin. That is, of course, quite in harmony with the perverted pacifistic teaching to which many sectors of the Christian Church have in recent years been exposed. An ardent Dutch pacifist, himself a professor of liberal theology, some years ago characterized his indictment of all war with the expressive title, 'De Zondeval van het Menschengeslacht' (*"The Fall of Man"*—*"Der Suendenfall des Menschengeschlechts"*). With their blind optimism as to the inherent goodness of human nature these 'liberals' first deny the reality of sin and the historicity of the Fall in the Biblical sense, and then they brand all taking of arms as the essence of human sin and the Fall. But not only is this thesis 'War is sin' part of the moral—or rather, immoral—furniture of the pacifists. There seem also to be some good Christian people, not infected with the poison of pacifism, who do not at once detect the moral fallacy in this proposition. 'War is sin' possibly appears a bit plausible when people think of the fact that there would be no war in the world without sin. But there is a great difference between holding—as we all do—that war is a result of sin, and affirming that war is sin. 'War is sin' means that anyone participating in war is sinning. And this is a great fallacy. The root error underlying this sort of judgment is its failure to distinguish between those who

by unprovoked aggression foist death and destruction upon others and those who in the course of their plain patriotic and Christian duty are called to protect their home and country against the assaults of such aggressors. Participation in the same war may be a sin for one person and a solemn duty for another. In the words of General MacArthur quoted above: 'I am surprised that men with clear and logical minds confuse defensive warfare with the disease which it alone can cure when all other remedies have failed.' The sweeping statement that war is sin cannot be harmonized with Scriptural, Christian teaching. War may be a sin for one nation and a solemn God-given duty for another. Only recently a Methodist bishop of the Middle West issued a statement for the benefit of the 763 ministers under his jurisdiction which, though it apparently was clearly antipacifistic, contained this fallacious sentence: 'I am sure war cannot be accepted as a Christian practice and receive the blessing of the Church.' It is quite possible that the bishop had not quite succeeded in purging his own sentences of the left-overs of a pacifistic leaven which used to permeate the whole lump until recently. It is well also for converted pacifists to speak in unambiguous terms. The new age upon which we are entering may be the age of the paradox, but I am sure it is not an age that will have much patience with the ambiguous use—or rather, misuse—of language to which an effete, unrealistic 'liberalism' has been treating its devotees for some decades. These are days in which to call a spade a spade."

The Modernistic rebellious attitude toward God's Word results in a rebellious attitude also toward lawful government and its rightful authority. In addition, Modernism must have a "talking point." Since it no longer recognizes sin in the Biblical sense, it declares something to be a sin which Scripture does not teach to be sinful at all, just to have something to say and something that sounds plausible and appealing, and, let us add, something with which to impress the people. The distinction between "war as a result of sin" and "war as sin essentially," which *The Calvin Forum* makes, is, as we believe, very helpful in clarifying the issue.

J. T. M.

Brief Items.—Speaking of the book of sermons by Dr. Fosdick "Living under Tension," the *British Weekly*, after some words of praise, says of the sermons: "Their weakness lies in their theology, or want of theology. We are reminded when handling this book of the remark of a friend: 'When I shake a man by the hand, I like to feel his bones.' It is not easy to feel the bones of firm theological thinking beneath all this artistic fleshing. He is afraid of dogma." Dr. Zwemer, in reporting the above in the *Presbyterian*, adds, "From quite another quarter comes a similar note: 'It is not more ethics that we need, but a more vertebrate creed.'" Our slogan must be, No dogmaphobia!

The *Christian Century* states that a union Lenten service was held in St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie. The clergymen that officiated were two Episcopalians, one Presbyterian, and a Lutheran, the Rev. Otto H. Bostrom, pastor of Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church. Supposing that this report is correct, we inquire, Why must such scandalous things happen?

A.